

# Officials address clustering policy

BY EMILY GALLIMORE  
STAFF WRITER

District officials and Asian-American parents met Monday to clarify a Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools policy about clustering practices.

The meeting was held to revisit concerns raised by Asian-American parents in July.

Superintendent Neil Pedersen described the clustering strategy and gave reasons for its practice. Placing students of the same minority race in the same classroom can help ease feelings of isolation, he said.

Clustering also enables English-as-a-second-language teachers to work with groups of children who speak the same native language without having to take them out of the classroom, he added.

The board policy regarding clustering says heterogeneous grouping usually is the best way to meet educational goals, but allows for homogenous grouping.

Pedersen said he doesn't want minority students to feel isolated in the classroom.

"I'm thinking we'd like to see maybe clusters of three to six," he said.

"We also don't want to see nine, 10, 11 because that sounds almost like a homogenous classroom."

But some parents questioned the practice of racial clustering at any number.

"I think we should just do random and do even numbers of Asians in classrooms," said Christine Lee, a parent of two children at Smith Middle School. Lee said there isn't a need to evenly distribute minority students.

Parents expressed concerns that clustering furthers racial biases.

"We have an image issue," Phillips Middle School parent Sarah Whang said. "We're going to be labeled forever foreigners because of the way we look. ... The current policy just adds fuel to that image."

Whang said the process is "blatant racism."

"Is it fair to put five Asian-American children into one classroom when they want to assimilate?"

late?"

Parent Sandy Wong said clustering practices cause Asian-American students to associate only with each other.

"I tell them, 'Make some white friends.' ... I tell my husband, 'Maybe we shouldn't have chosen Chapel Hill — (there's) too many Asians.'"

Pedersen cited a racial breakdown report that listed the number of students of each racial group per class, showing a more even distribution than some parents had expected.

"Perception may not match reality as to how numbers are breaking down in classrooms," school board chairwoman Lisa Stuckey said.

Stuckey explained that racial clustering is an option, not a requirement.

"It says we should normally heterogeneously group — unless racial isolation occurs," she said.

District officials agreed to continue to examine clustering practices to ensure their alignment with policy.

Contact the City Editor at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu).

## ELECTION

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Vacancies include one from mid-campus, two from South Campus, one from the off-campus district and nine graduate student seats.

The election also will mark the first time the Board of Elections' outreach division — which consists of about 100 volunteer members — will run voting stations.

"This will be the first time elections will be manned by an organized entity," said Jim Brewer, chairman of the elections board.

Regardless of who wins or loses, Brewer said he just wants students to show up at the polls.

"It is good to represent ourselves in Student Congress," he said. "I think it's important for people to realize that these are big issues that can affect everybody, and we can have a say in it through voting."

Contact the University Editor at [udesk@unc.edu](mailto:udesk@unc.edu).

## RESEARCH

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Student opportunities extend beyond fields such as neuroscience.

"Throughout the chemistry department we have close to a hundred undergraduates working in different labs," said Holden Thorp, chairman of the department of chemistry.

Jeannie Loeb, director for undergraduate research in psychology, said most professors are willing to involve interested students in research.

"(Professors) are always interested in collaborating with people who are just as interested," she said. "One day (those students) will be their colleagues."

Evelyn Huber, chairwoman of the political science department, said she has supervised several honors thesis projects. Seniors writing honors theses conduct research on a topic of their choice.

Students also can learn about research in a course called "Special Topics: Modes of Inquiry."

The office's Web site also includes a database of opportunities, advice from faculty and opportunities to obtain financial support.

The old-fashioned method of asking professors about their research also is recommended.

"(Students) just need to find a professor that's willing to take them into their lab," Thorp said. "Do that by going door to door."

Officials said the benefits of participating in research projects as an undergraduate extend into future endeavors.

"For those that are going on to chemistry grad school, that's probably the most important thing that grad schools look at," Thorp said.

Huber said it is important to learn research techniques that students can use in the workplace.

"You learn to think in terms of how — if you have an idea about something, to find out if that idea holds up."

Pukkila said she wants all students to get involved with research.

"It's a research University. You might as well get your money's worth."

Contact the University Editor at [udesk@unc.edu](mailto:udesk@unc.edu).

## DROP DEADLINE

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said.

Barbara Stenross, assistant dean for academic advising, said students often wait to find out their test grades before coming to academic advising to drop a course.

"There's always an increase toward the end of the drop period because students are waiting to get grades back," Stenross said.

Stenross said numerous advisers will hold walk-in hours today to assist students who wish to drop a course.

Despite the delayed deadline, Owen said she does not expect the two-week extension to significantly increase the number of drops.

"I'll be really surprised if there are more overall drops this year than a year ago," she said. "Students still need 12 hours a semester."

Numerous students said Monday that they were pleased with the new deadline.

"I think it's great," said Sarah Norris, a junior biology major from Wilson.

"The six weeks are good if you have a grade in the class, but it's really hard if there's only a midterm and a final," she said. "If you get a bad grade on the midterm, you can't drop it."

Lauren Bruton, a junior psychology major from Rocky Mount, said she is considering taking advantage of the new drop deadline.

Bruton said she is considering dropping her APPLS Service-Learning course because she is unsure whether she will be able to complete the required service hours.

APPLES is a service-learning program that introduces students to service opportunities in the surrounding community as well as offers classes.

"I have to get 30 hours, and it's already halfway through the semester," she said.

Undergraduate and graduate students who wish to take a class pass/D+/D/fail also must submit those declarations by 5 p.m. today.

Contact the University Editor at [udesk@unc.edu](mailto:udesk@unc.edu).

## Gregg Found



### Profile:

- CLASS: Junior
- HOMETOWN: Iowa City, Iowa
- HIGH SCHOOL: Iowa City West HS
- BIRTHDATE: 8/8/86
- HEIGHT / WEIGHT: 6-5 / 195
- POSITION: Forward

## TRYOUT

FROM PAGE 1

It's a constantly shifting relationship, and the dynamic got shaken up at the start of Monday's tryout.

JV coach C.B. McGrath announced that there would be a round of cuts after day two and that only those who made it past the cut would return for day three.

The names of the 25 to 30 guys who made it will be posted on the Smith Center door today at 10 a.m.

So by the time you read this, my hopes for JV glory might have vanished.

So how do I feel? I was upbeat after sinking a left-handed layup on a fast-break drill, but I was humbled seconds later when I looked the other way and collided into the next guy in line.

My team's record during the scrimmages won't qualify me for any squad, but I think I proved I can mesh well with teammates and snag some big rebounds.

Regardless, the look-good-or-go-home mentality pervaded Monday's tryout, which was all scrimmages after a brief warm-up.

Guys argued with each other during scrimmages about a touchy foul but cheered others during the

end-of-tryout sprints.

Some guys chat with everyone.

Some guys know no one. We shake hands and exchange names, but all we really want to know is "Can you make a three if I dish it to you?" and "Are you going to box out your guy so he doesn't get a rebound and make our team look stupid?"

Teammates from Sunday's scrimmage were Monday's opponents. Someone you elbowed in the jaw now might be your point guard.

We shared looks of frustration after our team lost — the only way to get seen is to be on the court and the way to get on the court is to win.

You lose and you're relegated to shoot jump shots on the side courts where only the janitors watch.

Teammates bickered with each other and fewer people shook hands after each game.

But no one tried to tear another player down. On the contrary, most of the dialogue was basketball business banter or a compliment on a nice play.

After all, if you can't make the JV team, you want to rest assured that those who did are better, not just the least ridiculed.

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## FAIR

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she said, gesturing to the milk cows in their stalls.

The fair also can teach the public about rising trends in the agricultural industry.

This year, for the first time in N.C. history, fair generators are running off of biodiesel derived from local soybeans.

Parker said that biodiesel could be the next big thing in N.C. agriculture, and that the fair provides the kind of promotion needed for the industry to grow.

"Any opportunity we have to promote biodiesel is always a plus, because people are interested in it," he said. "We're at a very exciting point in North Carolina with regard to biodiesel."

Contact the State & National Editor at [stntdesk@unc.edu](mailto:stntdesk@unc.edu).

## Overheard at the fair

**Wife:** "John, that there is the petting zool!"  
**Husband:** "Great! Wanna eat first?"

**Announcer for "Turkey Shootout":** "We got real shot guns right in here! Come on in! You can win a turkey!"

**Man describing fried Coca-Cola:** "It makes you lose weight and lower cholesterol."

**Announcer:** "The tiny lady from Haiti! Tiny Tina is so small, you can actually pick her up and carry her in your arms as you would a small child! She's here! She's real! She's alive!"

**Crying child:** "I wanna ride on that one, Momma!"  
**Mother:** "Shut up."

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